

MR. CONNAUGHTON: Thank you very much. Thank you to the entire panel. So it's now time to draw things to a close and for those of you who held out, and it looks like the greater majority of you have, we appreciate it and we have much work that lies ahead.

I want to do a couple things in closing. First, I want to do a few thank yous and acknowledgments. I do not want to be repetitive of what we've heard. So it's my mission which is a challenging one given the breadth of what we discussed to just see if I can give a few parting concepts to take us forward and then with that we will conclude this great conference in which we've all joined.

First on the thank yous, I mentioned Peggy yesterday. There's another individual from the Department of Interior who has put countless hours into this process and has achieved no sleep as a result and that's Bob Lamb. So Bob Lamb, if you all would give him a big round of applause.

Here on site, you've seen a frenetic individual running around with the ear piece in just making sure everything's happening the way it should and of course, that's Jim Gasser. So I want to give him a round of applause.

Back in my shop, there are three major cat herders and that's on their employment requirements, David Anderson, Ed Pinero and Mitch Butler. So you have not seen them, but boy have they been in the foundation for what you've seen in this conference.

Now I did this yesterday and they weren't here. So, the facilitators, could you please stand? The facilitators from yesterday, I just want to thank you all for the great job you did yesterday. I was really fabulous.

And then there are hundreds of others, many of them who are out in the hallway, who were in the rooms, back stage making things happen. You've seen them but what I'd ask you to do on your way out is not just saying thank you but shake their hand because they have really been the anchor to make this conference run so smoothly and by the way, I've been to a lot of conferences and this one has been incredibly smooth. But it's because of them. So inundate them with your thanks.

All right. Let me do a few things. First, I want to put the people side of this in perspective. We saw the videos. We hear about Roosevelt. We hear about the conferences that followed but I just want to remark on the fact that at the turn of the century it was a few dozen

governors and a President that initiated the conservation in that first chapter and it then grew to the ranks of thousands who participated for example in the Civilian Conservation Corps. The message got out and that was the government-led effort and you had thousands working. With the advent of Earth Day, hundreds of thousands of people, individuals, became involved in this great movements as we go forward.

But we stand at this point in the 21st century able to harness the ability of millions. We need to leave this room understanding that and looking for that. It's not about us. It's about the hundreds each of us can influence as we carry this message forward and that's a very important structural thing that we lose sight of as we focus on our own projects and our own agendas. So I just want to put the numbers in historical context.

But I also want to put the situation in historical context. The situation is this. During the 1800s, we began to build the physical infrastructure of this great nation with the railroads, with the telegraph, with the fact that the states were beginning to first fight each other but then work together through reconstruction.

When Roosevelt came online, we had the great engine of our presence in the world and began to build roads and we began to build gasoline networks and we had this great, I call it, the brown infrastructure. Then as we've worked our way into the modern age, we went from the brown hard infrastructure and now we're into social networks that have enabled us to have Kiwanis Clubs all over the country and have conventions. So we have these great social networks, and hubs. This physical infrastructure has enabled that.

Then as we've just witnessed, we've all lived through this information networking. So we have the physical network. We have the social networks. We have the tools, the informational network. Now these are historical trend lines to track these chapters of the conservation movement.

What I want to posit to all of you, it's actually our task and try to put some conceptual ordering on this, it's our task to find the way to develop for the 21st century this landscape network and hubs. That's what our task is and the confidence in achieving that task is represented in this session here today.

So let me give you a fine point of what it is that I mean. I pull out my Rand McNally atlas when I drove my family to Florida and you see the highways and you see

the rail lines around there, even the gas pipe lines. If you look at those maps, they're finely detailed with all the brown infrastructure. It's brown and gray and white and black. And it's all there in this wonderful latticework. It's beautiful latticework.

Well, what we showed over the course of this conference is there is actually emerging full color tapestry of greenways, of blueways being developed, of flyways being developed and of course in the heritage realm byways. There's this full color tapestry that is weaving over and above and through this brown and the grays and the blacks and the whites of this physical infrastructure and this electronic infrastructure.

I use my own example in Washington and it's taken some time in the 30 years I've been going back and forth to Washington, living in Washington, where I live now, and this was not the case before. I can get on my bike with my son and crossing four streets get to downtown Washington, D.C. whether it's along the circle trail or down through Rock Creek Park. We have four streets we have to cross in a seven to nine mile area and I can get to the inner city of Washington and find my way on the Mall, the Smithsonian, the Lincoln and Washington Memorials. By crossing just two more streets, just two, in a 26 mile stretch, I can take my son to George Washington's home in Mount Vernon with beautiful wetlands along the way with all this infrastructure. But that was the result of a lot of investment over time and over and under and through to again create this rich fabric work.

We saw the Chicago Wilderness had their lima bean that they're creating is what I call it. When you look at it, it looks like a nice lima bean and they're filling out the green and they're filling out the blue on that lima bean as they work within the physical structure in the networks of their own city. We see it across the river in D.C. The Four Mile Run Restoration Project is setting out that kind of a vision in a localized way.

Now what I suggest as we go forward and in fact the Florida Greenway, people are really impressed with that, this DoD project. We have a DoD anchor and then you have this huge greenway and then private communities and other things going on.

These are grand visions. They are not visions that are created by Washington. They are not linkages that are joined by Washington. They are linkages that occur and this will be the quote that I want to pick as my quote of the session. It came and I wish I could give due credit to

the individual who said it because their philosophy was "Starting each of our own projects with the next beginning in mind." It's a very powerful way about looking at what you're doing.

The goal here of this vision is how do we organize these pods of activity, these hubs, of cooperative conservation and then network them, network them in a very effective in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We know there is economic value to it.

My housing in Washington, I'm two and a half blocks from the Metro and that earns me a huge premium. But the other thing that earns me a huge premium is I'm a few blocks from that bike trail. These two network pieces go hand-in-hand in terms of good, old-fashion value.

But now how do you take that forward. Well, a few things. One, we need to understand the desire that as we work on our projects we want to know how to link them up with other projects. It will take decades but by the way, we're sitting on the shoulders of 100 years of that kind of work and thinking.

We also needs some core principles. Some I would just throw out that I heard from this conference. We need to emphasize local solutions. So it's local design because it has to be locally relevant and it involve the people who want this collective of outcomes. We need to harness the power of markets and I mean the economic equation in a hard core way, not a cost/benefit way. But how do you add value through these linkages? And we know they occur now and also as a way of maximizing environmental benefits.

We also through this exercise mobilized more people so they have environment or conservation on their business cards because it's about their communities. That's how we get to the millions piece. So it's citizen stewardship. It's entrepreneurship and volunteerism.

One small example of that - we are marrying the AmeriCorps Initiative with the Coastal Americas government-driven initiative. So we're taking folks focused on volunteerism and giving them a defined category of projects in the area of conservation. In fact, we have a dedicated area of the website under the Freedom Corps Initiative to conservation opportunities. So people who want to be volunteers give them a nice subject to work on.

Then we also have to ensure because this is what provides both the civic foundation and the economic foundation that we do this in a way that protects not just the private property rights for the benefit of individual

citizens and their communities but the private opportunities to reinvest and add to this value chain that I'm discussing.

So you were convened here to lay down really the planks or in this case, lay down the wetlands, the greenways, the blueways and the byways of what can be a quite vast and well integrated new network, landscape network, of conservation. That's why you were called here today.

I would note that the enthusiasm for this conference as such is we could have held a bunch more. We ended up being constrained by the size of a room and yet our vision here together knows no walls, knows no boundaries and that's what we need to carry forward. So that's what we're about, carrying this dialogue forward.

We have already now emblazoned that new path for conservation in the century before us. So all that's left for me to do is to thank all of you and thank all of those who are now going to engage with you as we carry this great vision forward. On behalf of President Bush who is really going to get a whole earful from me on what we've learned here today and on behalf of his team and his Administration and on behalf of the members of Congress who are now beginning to wake up and join in writing this new chapter, I want to thank all of you. So enjoy the rest of your day and travels.

ANNOUNCER: This concludes the White Conference on Cooperative Conservation. Thank you for your participation and we wish you safe travels to your homes.